

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 3844

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

DEPT PASS USCINCEUR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, US, JO
SUBJ: SALE OF US AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM TO JORDAN

REF: STATE 091634

1. COVERED CONTENTS OF REFTTEL WITH SHAH AS PRIVATE TALK FOLLOWING AUDIENCE GRANTED APRIL 17 TO INTRODUCE MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH MILES, NEW CHIEF OF ARMISH/MAAG. SHAH COULD SHED NO LIGHT ON WHY KING HUSSEIN AND JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER RIFAI HAD GIVEN PRESS STATEMENTS INDICATING THAT HAWK MISSILE DEAL WITH UNITED STATES WAS DEAD. HE OPINED THAT SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD BE WILLING TO PUT UP THE MONEY SINCE THEY HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH AND KING HUSSEIN IS PERPETUALLY IN TIGHT FINANCIAL STRAITS. THE SHAH THEN RAN OVER THE WELL-KNOWN DIFFICULTIES OF KING HUSSEIN'S CURRENT POSITION AND COMMENTED, AS HE HAS ON OTHER OCCASIONS, THAT HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONFIDENCE OF THE JORDANIANS IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD AND FOR THAT MATTER WITH THE SOVIETS. "HOW CAN A MONARCH TRUST A BA'ATHIST", HE QUERIED. WHEN KING HUSSEIN WAS LAST IN TEHRAN FOLLOWING HIS STATE VISIT TO JAPAN, HE POINTED OUT TO THE SHAH THAT IRAN HAD BOUGHT EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND THEREFORE WHY SHOULD NOT JORDAN DO

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THE SAME THING. THE SHAH QUICKLY ADDED THAT HIS MILITARY

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES WERE JEEPS, TRUCKS, AND PERSONNEL CARRIERS WHEREAS THE JORDANIANS WERE PROPOSING TO PURCHASE A HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. THE DISTINCTION WAS SIGNIFICANT, THE SHAH ADDED.

2. WHEN THE SHAH RHETORICALLY ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT WAS BOTHERING KING HUSSEIN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI, MY REPLY WAS THAT I HONESTLY DID NOT KNOW EXCEPT PERHAPS GENERAL FRUSTRATION WITH THEIR LOT. AS FOR RELATIONS WITH IRAN, ONE EPISODE INVOLVED PRIME MINISTER RIFAI. I TOLD SHAH I HAD HEARD THAT RIFAI WAS IRRITATED BY THE FACT THAT ON HIS VISIT TO TEHRAN WITH KING HUSSEIN, THE IRANIAN PROTOCOL OFFICER HAD OMITTED TO REGISTER HIM INTO THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL AND THAT HE HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO DO THIS HIMSELF WHEN HE ARRIVED. THIS STORY TOLD ME BY THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR A FEW DAYS AGO HAD COME TO MY ATTENTION MUCH EARLIER VIA MINISTER OF COURT ALAM. THE KUWAITI AMBASSADOR ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT PRIME MINISTER KOVEYDA HAD NOT MADE THE SLIGHTEST GESTURE TO RECOGNIZE PRIME MINISTER RIFAI'S PRESENCE IN TEHRAN. THESE ITEMS HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CONVEYED TO HIM BY THE JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR WHO HAD INCIDENTALLY HEARD RECENTLY, HE TOLD ME, THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD AGREED TO GO AS HIGH AS \$650 MILLION FOR THE JORDANIAN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. I REPLIED THAT I HAD NOT BEEN TOLD OF THIS OFFER.

HELMS

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